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How to Read the Newspaper

A RESOURCE UNIT FOR THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Since the teaching of modern communication is one of the primary functions of any English course, it seems apparent that a thorough study of the newspaper is an essential part of the English program. The following unit is concerned with resources. It is hoped that it will serve as a basis for further and more elaborate work on the newspaper in the school. Material from this unit was utilized in a two-week unit at Champaign Senior High School in a Types of Literature class.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To develop the ability to read a newspaper critically and intelligently.
2. To stimulate an interest in reading the newspaper.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To recognize and understand the standards by which a good newspaper is judged.
2. To understand something of the influence the makeup, headlines, and illustrations of a newspaper have on the reader.
3. To know how to obtain source material for further aid in reading the newspaper.
4. To recognize that a newspaper is editorially influenced and that thus the material in it reflects the policy of the editor.
5. To recognize that the news in a paper may be influenced by the many advertisers who contribute to the newspaper.
6. To realize that headlines are determined by the newspaper using them and thus they may be "slanted" to fit the opinion of the editor.

7. To be able to recognize propaganda in the news and to evaluate it.

8. To be able to differentiate between real news and trivial or human interest news. To be able to recognize the constructive trivialities in the news and the destructive trivialities in the news.

9. To understand and recognize the values and the evils of crime news.

10. To be able to understand and recognize the advantages and disadvantages of sensationalism in the newspaper.

11. To realize that the reader too is prejudiced toward certain things and thus will be more likely to believe what he wants to believe.

12. To know how a newspaper may be skimmed and still afford the reader an adequate picture of the news.

Ways of Introducing a Unit on Newspapers:

There are many ways by which a unit on newspapers may be introduced to a class. The practicality of each method will vary according to the type of school, ability of the class, size of the community, wealth of the community, the geographical location, etc.

1. One appropriate way to introduce this unit would be to stimulate class discussion during a particularly important event that is current in the news. A political campaign affords an extremely apt occasion for such a unit.

2. Another way no less important but presenting a possible economic restriction would be to have the students pay a nickel or a dime at the beginning of the school year. With this money subscribe to about eight or ten newspapers for a couple of weeks. The papers subscribed to should represent a good sampling of the nation's newspapers. I should most certainly subscribe to the following, for they present sharp contrasts in editorial policy:

The New York Times (especially the Sunday edition)
The Christian Science Monitor
St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Chicago Daily News
Chicago Tribune

As to the other four or five, they could be any notable newspapers in the country. The following serve only as a suggested list:

The Des Moines Register
Minneapolis Tribune

The Times-Picayune
Fort Worth Star Telegram
The Philadelphia Inquirer
Cleveland Plain Dealer
The Washington Post
The Atlanta Constitution

If the school is well financed it would be worth-while to secure a few copies of *The Times* (London) or *The Manchester Guardian*. This would enable the students to gain an intelligent view of the news other than that presented in American newspapers.

3. Another way to introduce this unit is to have a member of the school's journalism department (if the school has one) come into class and deliver a talk to the students about various standards by which a newspaper is judged, some of the influences the newspaper has on the public, or maybe a discussion of the propagandistic techniques of the newspaper including a brief summary of the terminology connected with propaganda.

4. The English teacher could introduce such a unit by asking certain questions of the students which would reveal to a degree just what the average pupil reads in a newspaper. As a list of *possible* questions the teacher might ask:

- A. Whom did Daisy Mae catch in the last Sadie Hawkins race?
- B. What is the name of the Lone Ranger's Indian friend?
- C. Who won the World Series in 1949?
- D. Who is the retired heavyweight champion of the world?

There is hardly any doubt as to how many correct answers you would receive to these questions, but see how they do on the following ones:

- A. Who is Anna Louise Strong? Cham Weizman? Walter Reuther?
- B. What is ERP? UNESCO? ECA? Declaration of Human Rights?
- C. Where is the Kremlin located? From what state is Alben Barkley?

5. Visual aids afford yet another procedure by which the unit may be introduced. The University of Illinois Visual Aids Service has available for rental to the high schools various films which could be used in newspapers study. An extremely good film which could be used to provoke interest in studying the newspaper is the *Coronet* film "How To Judge Facts" (see bibliography). This

deals with a high school boy reporter who finds that he had better check the "facts" in a story he has just written. From this the teacher has a good springboard from which to launch class study of the newspaper.

6. If the teacher is limited in the time he has to study the newspaper and wants to ensure coverage of the topics which the students want to examine, he could submit a list of items found in a newspaper. The class members could then vote on the points they wanted to consider in the unit.

Learning Activities:

(Assumed that the subject of newspapers has been introduced and the students have responded favorably to your suggestion for further work on the unit.)

1. Length of time spent on this unit and variety of treatment would determine the necessity of using a textbook for reference. If a text is to be used, I would recommend the book *How To Read A Newspaper*, by Edgar Dale. Other books which deal with specific problems of the newspaper are: *Freedom of the Press and You Can't Print That*, by George Seldes; *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique*, by Leonard Doob; *News and the Human Interest Story*, by Helen MacGill Hughes; *Your Newspaper*, by Leon Svirsky; *The News and How to Understand It*, by Quincy Howe, and *Freedom of Information*, by Herbert Brucker. Pamphlets and other materials which will prove valuable in the study of the newspaper can be obtained by writing to *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, or *Chicago Daily News*. Much of this material is free for the writing, while the rest may be obtained for a very low cost.

2. Distribute the newspapers to the class. They may be distributed to the students individually or given to them as a group and examined by the group. Rather than have the students examine the papers aimlessly, furnish the class with questions keyed to particular issues in the paper which you want them to discover. (Do not be too worried if the students seem to read the comics, sport page, variety column, etc., more than the actual news content of the paper. It is because this is their usual diet of newspaper reading that you are teaching this unit.)

3. Deliver a short talk on the standards by which a good newspaper is judged. This might include such topics as:

- A. Trivialities in the news
- B. Crime news and sensationalism
- C. Typographical influences

- D. Location of story in the paper
- E. Amount and type of advertising
- F. Amount and handling of international-national-state news

Have the class discuss these points.

4. Find material in newspaper or magazine articles, which indicate strong influence of editor's policy, influence of advertiser, and influence of certain social pressure groups. Have the class discuss these influences and try to reach definite conclusions on them.

5. Try clipping news stories out of a paper and distributing them to class. Have class members decide what editorial policy the newspaper holds. Do not allow the students to know the name of paper stories were clipped from until they have determined policy. Be sure that students give supporting evidence for decisions.

6. An excellent way to promote critical and analytical thinking is to have the students pick newspapers and tentatively classify them as to:

- A. Those that call forth the reasoning process
e.g. *The New York Times* and *The Christian Science Monitor*
- B. Those that appeal to the reader's emotions
e.g. *Chicago Herald-American* and *Daily News* (New York)
- C. Those that aim to teach facts about people and things
e.g. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

7. There are many ways by which a teacher can introduce the all-important topic of propaganda. Perhaps the most effective, but at the same time difficult, way is to show the class a concrete example of propaganda. To make this effective the class should be unaware that they are witnessing propaganda. Thus when the teacher informs them what has taken place they will be all the more convinced. Another way, perhaps not quite so effective but a great deal easier to perform, is to read them two examples of propaganda taken from one of our popular periodicals. One of the examples should be something that they are accustomed to reading, such as a soap or patent medicine ad. The other should be an ad presented by one of the pharmaceutical companies telling of the symptoms and recent developments in the study of cancer, tuberculosis, infantile paralysis, etc. After reading the two examples, ask the class which they believe contains less desirable propaganda.

8. Stimulate a discussion as to how a newspaper can be read

effectively yet in the length of time one has to spend on a newspaper. Mention to them that an average newspaper in a large city contains 60,000 words. Is it possible to read all the newspaper if one spends only thirty minutes a day on it? Set up concrete situations and see how the class responds to them. What possible solutions do they offer?

9. What state of mind should the reader of a newspaper be in? Should he be objective, neutral, or subjective? Or does the state of mind depend on the type of paper being read and the situation? What, besides ability to read and desire for knowledge or entertainment, does the reader of a newspaper bring with him? Does the reader know what he will believe before reading the news? These questions and many others could be tossed out to the students in order to fulfill objective number eleven.

10. To introduce such a controversial subject as "freedom of the press," give the class an agree-disagree test on questions dealing with the subject. Use this as an indication of their views on the topic of "freedom of the press," realizing though at the same time that many of them have given it but scarce consideration. The following serve as examples of the type of questions which could be asked:

A. Under the rights of a democracy a newspaper is free to print anything that it chooses to print, except that in times of war it must not print information which might aid the enemy.

B. The right of "freedom of the press" is specifically stated in the Constitution of the United States.

C. A proposal by the government to restrict certain material in a newspaper should be accepted without question, for the government is the interpreter of our democratic rights.

D. Tolerating opinions which do not agree with our opinions is a part of "freedom of the press."

E. Corruption in our government should not be discussed by our newspapers for any scandal about the United States would tend to discredit our nation.

Another medium of introducing "freedom of the press" to the class is visual aids. The Visual Aids Service of the University of Illinois has available a film entitled "Story That Couldn't Be Told," which presents the trial of John Peter Zenger and the great influence it had on the drafting of the first amendment.

11. A good way to impress the students with the need for a more intelligent consideration of crime news is to select half a dozen or more headlines from crime stories. Read these to the class; then ask them questions about what problems such headlines

present. The *Chicago Herald-American*, the *Daily News* (New York), or almost any tabloid will usually feature such headlines daily.

12. It is assumed and hoped that students will retain what knowledge they have obtained in this unit, and that in later life if they should desire to find information on a particular aspect of the newspaper they will be able to do so. In a short talk explain how it is possible to keep in touch with developments in the newspaper field. Include the government agencies (both federal and state), welfare agencies, newspaper companies, and any other means which furnish to the public information on the newspaper.

Concluding Activities:

After material has been covered and you believe the students have an adequate amount of information, it might be well to draw up a summary of the most important points of the unit as discussed and agreed upon by the class. Ask for suggestions on possible means of improving the unit. Be open to any comments which the students might make. It is easily possible that the class might possess a particular novel idea that would enrich the unit. Having done this, now proceed with the testing activities.

1. Have students individually or in group panels select a topic which appeals to them and report on it to the class. The execution of the report is to be left to the students, but the teacher may suggest using the newspapers, visual aids, poster displays, or real-life situations, to illustrate their points.

2. Closely connected with the above activity is that of having panel discussions on certain issues involved in this unit. The following is a list of possible issues:

- A. The suppression of crime news often enables the criminal to escape.
- B. Editors of a newspaper should consider the interests of the public above the interests of the advertiser.
- C. The newspapers should give the public what it wants rather than what it needs.
- D. Newspapers should be able to print anything they want—for doesn't our democracy call for "freedom of the press?"
- E. Newspapers that are biased and print propaganda should be denied the right of publication.

3. On the basis of what they have learned in their study, students could plan what they consider the "ideal" newspaper.

4. Conduct a survey in the community to find out newspaper circulation. Such questions as the following could be asked:

- A. What newspapers do you take?
- B. Which one(s) do you prefer? Why?
- C. Which portion of the paper do you like best? Why?

5. Write newspaper stories covering such events as political, military, domestic or social issues. Have students consider the points they have learned about what makes a good newspaper in writing these stories.

6. You are a newspaper editor. An important community issue has arisen. The opponents of this issue number as many as the adherents. Keeping in mind that you have a definite opinion about what you think should be done, write an editorial, but present a fair and just argument.

7. Make a display of newspaper stories representing different treatment of the news. Label each story as to the way it is written.

8. Draw an editorial cartoon which will appeal to the reader's emotions, and one which will appeal to his rational sense.

9. Clip ten newspaper pictures which you consider to be in bad taste, and ten which you consider to be worthy of publication. Give reasons for choice.

10. If you were the parent of teen-age children would you permit them to read a tabloid newspaper? Write a paper on your answer, telling the case for and the case against the tabloids.

11. "Our London bureau says *The Times* (London) under a French frontier date quotes a source at Vichy as saying it had a report from Munich that Fritz Thyssen, German industrialist and former Hitler backer, has died in a concentration camp. Available sources at London were unable to confirm this rumor and an effort is being made at Berlin to check it." What is the full significance of this paragraph? Write a paper about this significance.

12. Compare the handling of political-labor-military news in *The New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, or the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. Compare the terminology employed in these papers. (Cf. S. S. Sargent in the bibliography.)

13. Study the treatment given to crime news in various newspapers; then make an analysis of the study and submit it to the class. Consider such things as the importance of the crime, the amount of coverage given by each newspaper to the story, the style each paper uses, and how much emphasis is put on the social implications of the crime.

TEACHER REFERENCES:**Books**

Bird, George L. and Merwin, Frederic E., *The Newspaper and Society*, New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1942. This is an excellent list of readings on topics which are "musts" in understanding a newspaper. The exercises at the end of the chapters are valuable for testing activities.

Brucker, Herbert, *Freedom of Information*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949. This book written by a member of the journalism faculty at Columbia University is a presentation of how newspapers must strive for greater objectivity if they are to have freedom of information. The book should be known to the teacher of any unit on newspapers, for the fresh and important information which it has to offer.

Dale, Edgar, *How to Read A Newspaper*, New York: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1941. This book, written by a distinguished member of the Bureau of Educational Research at Ohio State, and a member of the Committee on Standards for Motion Pictures and Newspapers of the N. C. T. E., is an extremely good selection to use as a text in the study of the newspaper. It is concerned especially with the social aspects of the newspaper. It is filled with interesting and informative illustrations to make the reading more meaningful and at the same time more enjoyable.

Doob, Leonard, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1935. This is one of the most widely used and quoted books on propaganda as such. There is a section (pp. 333-359) which concerns itself entirely with the role of propaganda in the newspapers.

Hayakawa, S. I., *Language In Action*, Chicago: Institute of General Semantics, 1234 East 65th Street, 1941. This book is extremely valuable in helping to understand the powerful influences the printed word has on us. It is written by one of the leading authorities on semantics today. A revised edition is now available.

Howe, Quincy, *The News and How To Understand It*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940. Quincy Howe is a noted C.B.S. reporter and commentator. In this book he offers from years of experience and understanding his frank and authentic opinions on the news and the significance it has on the public. There is a good bibliography and list of newspaper syndicates at the end of the book.

Hughes, Helen, *News and The Human Interest Story*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940. Here is a book that deals extensively with the role that human interest stories play in our

daily lives. There is a valuable bibliography on human interest material.

Svirsky, Leon, Editor, *Your Newspaper*, New York: Macmillan Co., 1947. This is a very good reference on the position of the newspaper today. The author lists the evils of our contemporary press and offers means of remedying these faults.

Pamphlets

Dale, Edgar, and Spicer, Verna, "Newspaper Discrimination," Columbus: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, April, 1942. This is a selected list of forty-five articles having for their purpose the better understanding of the newspaper in the classroom. The foreword has a valuable commentary on how the newspaper can better contribute to our understanding of the world situation. The "suggestions for further reading" include a list of books dealing with the important facets of a newspaper.

Dale, Edgar, and Vernon, Norma, "Propaganda Analysis," Columbus: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, May, 1940. This contains a selected list of articles concerned with the many ramifications of propaganda. They are confined to the role of propaganda study in our classrooms. It suggests some helpful books for further study of propaganda.

"How To Get The Most Out Of Your Newspaper." Published as an educational service by *The New York Herald Tribune*, 230 West 41st Street, New York 18, New York, 1949. This interesting booklet is divided into three sections. The first, Reading, tells how a newspaper can be read thoroughly, yet in the time usually allotted to reading a newspaper. The second part, Learning, shows what a newspaper has to offer the reader. The last section, Evaluating, tells what makes a good newspaper. The entire booklet is furnished with amusing and helpful illustrations to make the reader enjoy reading it.

"How To Read The News," *Educational and National Defense Series*. No. 16. Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. Fifteen cents each. This pamphlet, written during the last war, is keyed to the idea of helping the school to better understand our world events. There are helpful remarks on propaganda, critical analyses of the news, and many other subjects which will clarify reading a newspaper.

Miller, Clyde R., "What Everybody Should Know About Propaganda," Commission For Propaganda Analysis, Methodist Federation For Social Action, 150 5th Avenue, New York 11, New York. 1948. Twenty-five cents each. This little pamphlet is

full of real "meat" for studying propaganda. The author is head of The Institute For Propaganda Analysis, and has given careful study to this important social issue. It contains a careful explanation of the seven devices of propaganda most commonly used, an explanation of the causes and cures, and the full influence of this subject.

Reid, Richard, "The Morality of The Newspaper." A series of five lectures given at the University of Notre Dame. University Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 1938. These lectures cover the influences, defects, difficulties, ethics, and improvement of our newspapers. The lecturer has worked in this field extensively, and is well versed on the subject which he has covered.

Periodicals

Andrews, Katherine, "3-B Class Studies the Newspaper," *English Journal*, Vol. 35, November, 1946, pp. 497-500.

Burton, Philip Ward, "Newspaper Reading Behavior of High School Students," *School and Society*, Vol. 63, February 2, 1946, p. 86.

Chamberlen, Maude, "Improvement of Newspaper Reading," *English Journal*, Vol. 29, October, 1940, pp. 639-647.

Cox, Mary Hodge, "Learning How to Read A Newspaper," *Curriculum Journal*, Vol. 10, April, 1939, pp. 172-174.

Dale, Edgar, "How to Teach Newspaper Reading," *The Scholastic Editor*, Vol. 18, January, 1939, p. 83.

Hedden, Caryl G., "Purple Cows In The Classroom," *English Journal*, Vol. 35, December, 1946, pp. 561-562.

John, Mellie, "Teaching the Newspaper In the High School," *The Illinois Teacher*, Vol. 28, May, 1940, p. 283.

Sargent, S. S., "Emotional Stereotypes in the *Chicago Tribune*," *Sociometry*, Vol. 2, April, 1939, pp. 69-75.

Visual Aids

A Series of News Events, 1938-1945 inclusive. Each is one reel, 11 minutes, rental \$1. 16mm. Visual Aids Service, Division of University Extension, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois. Use as basis for discussion on treatment of news stories.

"How To Judge Authorities," one reel, 11 minutes, rental \$1. 16mm. Available at Visual Aids Service, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois. This is a *Coronet* film which deals with the subject of judging your source of authority. A boy wants to become a lawyer, has talked to two authorities on law about the decision. The film shows how he decides which is *the* authority.

"How To Judge Facts," one reel, 11 minutes, rental \$1. 16mm. Available at Visual Aids Service, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois. Another *Coronet* film. This shows a reporter on the high school paper who thinks he has a "hot" story until he checks on his facts. It covers such topics as assumptions, conclusions, "hearsay," and other issues that need to be considered in judging the worth of anything.

"Story That Couldn't Be Told," one reel, 11 minutes, rental \$1. 16mm. Available at Visual Aids Service, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois. This is one of the Hollywood "Passing Parade" series. It deals with the trial of John Zenger which helped establish the precedent of freedom of the press.

STUDENT REFERENCES:

Books

Dale, Edgar, *How To Read A Newspaper*, New York: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1941.

Drewry, John E., *Post Biographies of Famous Journalists*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1942. Mr. Drewry has compiled a very fine collection of biographies of notable journalists. The collection includes biographies of such men as Robert R. McCormick, William Randolph Hearst, Marshall Field III, Clifton Fadiman, Joseph Pulitzer, and many others who, in their own distinct way, have made a place for themselves in the field of journalism.

Drewry, John E., *More Post Biographies*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1947. The success of *Post Biographies . . .* led Mr. Drewry to publish another book of similar nature. However, in this book, the author includes not only famous journalists but famous journals and publications. Then too, the selections are more nearly contemporary and the articles are prefaced with a section of comments by the author. Among the journalists written about in this collection are such people as Ernie Pyle, John S. Knight, and Arthur Krock. The sections concerned with well known journals and columns include Pugnacious Pearson, Up Front With Bill Mauldin, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Hayakawa, S. I., *Language In Action*, Chicago: Institute of General Semantics, 1234 East 65th Street, 1941.

Howe, Quincy, *The News And How To Understand It*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940.

Lundberg, Ferdinand, *Imperial Hearst: A Social Biography*, New York: Equinox Cooperative Press, 1936. Here is a book that shows just how powerful the press can be when it is in the hands of one man. It deals with the life of Hearst from the begin-

ning when he first launched his newspaper career, to 1936. The book is written by a former Hearst reporter but is an authentic picture of the man who controls one of the largest newspaper syndicates in the world.

Seldes, George, *You Can't Print That*, Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1929. This is a treatment of propaganda in the first World War. The author was a war correspondent for one of the famous New York newspapers.

Svirsky, Leon, *Your Newspaper*, New York: Macmillan Co., 1947.

Tebbel, John, *An American Dynasty*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1947. This is another book which is written about the powerful force of newspaper owners. It is the story of the McCormicks, Medills, and Pattersons.

The Newspaper: Its Making and Its Meaning, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945. Here is a chance to see a great newspaper at work told by its finest reporters. The book is about *The New York Times*.

Pamphlets

Cushman, Robert E., "Keep Our Press Free," *Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 123*, 1946. Public Affairs Committee Inc., 22 East 38th Street, New York, New York. 10c each.

Ellard, Roscoe, "How To Read Editorials," National Council for the Social Studies. *Seventh Yearbook*. 1937.

"How To Get The Most Out Of Your Newspaper." Published as an educational service by *The New York Herald Tribune*, 230 West 41st Street, New York 18, New York, 1949.

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Anonymous, "How To Analyze Newspapers," *Institute For Propaganda Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 4, January, 1938, pp. 1-4.

Anonymous, "How To Detect Propaganda," *Institute For Propaganda Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 2, November, 1937, pp. 1-4.

Anonymous, "Newspaper Analysis," *Institute For Propaganda Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 5, February, 1938, pp. 1-4.

Anonymous, "Some ABC's of Propaganda Analysis," *Institute For Propaganda Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 3, December, 1937, pp. 1-4.

Hoffman, U. N., "How To Read Your Daily Newspaper," *Quill and Scroll*, Vol. 12, October-November, 1937, p. 7.

Sargent, S. S., "Emotional Stereotypes In The *Chicago Tribune*," *Sociometry*, Vol. 2, April, 1939, pp. 69-75.

Wolseley, R. E., "What's A Good Newspaper?" *The Scholastic Editor*, Vol. 18-19, March, 1939, pp. 127-28.

The Teaching of American Ideals—IV

STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO IDEALISTIC LITERATURE

By SISTER MARY EVELYN, R.S.M.
Mercy High School, Chicago

Mercy, a Chicago central high school for girls, is conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. Staffed by fifty Sisters, three priests, and six lay teachers, it is now in its twenty-fifth year.

The school building, surrounded by a landscaped campus a city block square, accommodates approximately one thousand girls. They come from South Side city schools and from nearby suburban towns such as Evergreen Park, Oak Lawn, and Palos Park.

Upper middle class families, about three-fourths of them homeowners, comprise our community. From two-thirds to three-fourths of our graduates go on to institutions of higher learning.

The foundation or the intensifying of an appreciation of American ideals in the hearts and minds of the students has long been the purpose for teaching American literature in our junior English classes. But perhaps in the past we have too much emphasized authors, titles, and beauty of expression. Stimulated by the I.A.T.E., we have carried through a semester-long project in American ideals, and we have discovered a definite and healthy growth among the students toward a truer, more active appreciation of our American heritage. The study of ideals has had a wholesome effect upon students' work in other subjects and has come to have cogency in their everyday out-of-school living.

Our activities during the semester consisted of the following: reading in various textbooks; preparation of long documented themes on such topics as George Washington Carver, Irving Berlin, Father Flanagan's Boys' Town, Jane Adams, and Alcoholics Anonymous; observation of life about us and consequent round table discussions; listening to and reporting on interracial forums and lectures; visiting and serving in three social centers: Friendship House, Marillac House, and Hull House; and experimenting for one week on having a "good time" without spending money.

The particular ideals which served as our guides were these:

- I. Toleration and social equality
- II. The dignity of the individual
- III. Recreation and leisure independent of money

Needless to say, I and II frequently overlap, and III ought to and often does include one of the first two.

The body of this article consists of students' reactions to much of the literature that we studied. Thus it serves as a kind of bibliography annotated by our students. Although the reading ability and the I.Q.'s of most of our students are above average, it is significant that some of the most penetrating comments were made by students whose ability and intelligence are not particularly high.

I. TOLERATION

A. It is not surprising to find the students, first of all, feeling that toleration expresses itself best in the unity of all Americans.

1. When I read the following statement about Clare Booth Luce, in her biography by Henle Faye:

At first she declined the invitation to enter politics, but eventually she realized that she might be of service to her country in public life.

it reminded me of something said by a visitor from New Zealand to our home last month. His words were:

One thing that impresses most foreign visitors to America is the attitude of individual dignity, of tranquil self-confidence that the Americans possess; the attitude of living for a purpose, of realizing the need to give something, to be of service to their country and to those within it—this is a truly American outlook.

In truth, I hope he is right. Yes, I believe he is right! That is our way of life.

* * * *

2. Walt Whitman, to my mind, is a most outstanding writer on this subject. His whole theme seems to be: all are one, and all are happy here in America. Everything he wrote is about toleration, or equality, or dignity of the common man in America. Here is one quote:

A million people—manners free and superb—open voices—hospitality—the most courageous and friendly ones on earth.

* * * *

3. Here is another one by Walt Whitman which we all know, but now we can appreciate it much better than ever before. It is from "Pioneers! O Pioneers."

From the mines and from the gully, from the hunting trail we come.

The whole poem is saturated with expressions of toleration—the unity of all of us as equals in America. Of course, there is no pioneering today, but nevertheless, we must be all as one in these dangerous times of our own day. We have been one in war against

tyranny; we *must* be one for peace. We are, here at Mercy, I think.

* * * *

4. James Russell Lowell, in "The Present Crisis," speaks of our unity this way:

In the gain and loss of one race all have equal claim.

While Mr. Lowell is protesting our war with Mexico, his words sound true today. We are still our brothers' keepers. We are still one, not only with one another, but with all humanity. Why? Because we believe in toleration! Because we believe in the dignity of human nature, the dignity of all peoples in the world.

5. To continue the subject of our unity I wish to refer to Mr. Charles W. Eliot's writing, "What Is An American?" After a lengthy worthwhile paragraph about

the common ideals, hopes, and aims of the many peoples assembled in this nation,

I believe he says all that we are trying to say, in his conclusion:

Whoever governs his life by them—the ideals above—is an American, whatever his origin, his race, or his station.

There's nothing more to say; is there? This is it!

* * * *

6. And Stephen Vincent Benét, in our day, says in "Prayer,"

If their freedom is taken away, our freedom is taken away.

This is what we really believe. And so we defend our own minorities. And we go on still further in this time of world need; we send food, and money, and clothing everywhere in the world—to all in need. This is toleration and unity in action.

* * * *

7. Paul de Kruif is a very different kind of writer. But I feel he is a true American when he is trying to help all, trying to stem the way of ignorance and neglect about what science and scientific men can do for all Americans and, in fact, all people. He is a true American, too, when he so justly appreciates what others have done and are doing.

* * * *

B. Keeping in mind that within this group there are many nationalities represented, we now point out that toleration consists in unity in diversity.

1. Sloyan Prebchevick, a new author to most of us, writes of his experiences "In an American Factory." The entire article of six pages continues, from beginning to end, with such instances as this:

We were only twenty in our group in the assembly room, but we were of fourteen different nationalities.

The entire piece of enlightening writing is about American good fellowship. The author is surely glad to be in America. So are we all!

* * * *

2. I read that selection, too. And I really like it; but I was dumbfounded to learn that a European coming to our country could be "surprised" to find in America a respect for physical work—and to hear him say that he had never known that in Europe! We surely do have toleration enough for one another to respect each other's work, for we recognize dignity in all kinds of work. Maybe we can do that easier now, because we high school girls work and respect each other's labor.

3. "What Keeps the Subway Safe" brings out another instance of our respect for one another. This is by Mr. Robert B. Peck. Just this one line will tell what I mean:

Scores of people have written in to suggest various improvements in one line or other.

Business concerns ask for this—suggestions by its employees and patrons, for these latter are equal to the heads of the business. It matters not who they may be. They are all Americans and they are therefore all worthy of a hearing. Executives, foremen, office help, factory workers, employees, all—they are all working for the good of the common people—the good of all America.

* * * *

4. I'd like to go back to the article, "In an American Factory," if I may. One sentence there has made me think a lot. Here it is.

Again and again I felt compelled to reflect upon the question which that young married worker once put to me: 'What are you living for?'

There must have been a philosopher in that factory. Yes, I suppose there are really philosophers round about us everywhere. We can be thinkers ourselves if we just give ourselves a chance. And America has need of thinkers.

* * * *

5. Will you accept a response from Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt*? Here he says what all good citizens say at times:

Well, there's more than six weeks in all, before the Republican Convention, and I feel a fellow ought to keep an open mind and give all the candidates a show; look 'em over and size 'em up, and then decide."

To me that's America—that's the kind of toleration and dignity that is ours! Not the kind that says one thing and means another—as they do in the subjected countries of Europe. We tolerate all parties.

* * * *

C. To be able to "see ourselves as others see us" can be most enlightening and helpful. Here the students examine toleration in the light of the American spirit.

* * * *

1. A very early writer, Joaquin Miller, gives in the resolute cry of Columbus, "Sail on! sail on and on!" a certain determination that depicts the spirit of America right from the very start. That cry is the foundation of our ideas and of our fight for the realization of our ideals. It is the expression of our spirit, which refuses to be conquered.

* * * *

2. Let me add another of Joaquin Miller's writings. It is called "Exodus to Oregon." There he uses the words:

For us there could be no turning back. We were not made of that material.

Now I want to show that that spirit still is strong. We all remember General McAuliff's classic message to the enemy at the Battle of the Bulge, in our last war! No, we never turn back; we are still made of that material! That, I think, is the basis of our dignity as individuals and as part of the nation.

* * * *

3. In a different vein of thought, Robert Frost is picturing the American spirit in "The Death of the Hired Man." I refer to the lines:

"He has come home to die."

"Home?" he asked gently.

And then follow the now famous two definitions of home. This I call toleration in the spirit of America. It is a tribute to our respect for the dignity of man. The useless, worn-out hired man—almost a tramp—is entitled to come there and feel it is his home. Why? Because he hasn't any other, and he is in need. He is an American.

4. From that same poem I have selected these lines as part of our project:

Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self respect!

We don't have to guess what Mr. Frost means there. He says it right out. That is an example of the American ideals, which recognize the human dignity and the need of self respect—even for the old "seasonal" farm hand.

* * * *

5. I should like to show America's toleration in the *spiritual* life of her people. Everyone ought to read "Our Lady of Mercy" by Louis Zara. The author is a Chicagoan. It is a beautiful story of true American ideals . . . daily acts of consideration for those whose beliefs run counter to ours. Best of all in the story is the Catholic priest's answer to the two little Jewish boys' questions, "Is this a Christmas present? Is it?" He answers: "No, children, this is a gift—a gift—but not for Christmas!" That answer deserves credit as superior toleration—and even more—as moral and spiritual recognition of the sincere religious conscience of the Jewish boys' parents.

* * * *

6. Just one more! It is pertinent! "When a man wishes to become better than he is, when he forsakes his prejudices and intolerant views, when he toils to make his dreams come true, when he learns to hope, to love, then he possesses the American spirit." That says it all. Doesn't it? I found that in "Patriotism Begins at Home" by H. W. Grady.

* * * *

7. "Our Town" is the story of daily life in America—of birth, love, marriage, and death at Grover's Corners—and that is all the little towns in America and all the neighborhoods in bigger cities in America—where people are bound together and feel akin—living their democratic ideas and observing their civic duties. The entire play is about our subject. . . . The Doctor, the parents, the neighbors, the lovers—theirs is a typical American toleration of nationalities, religions, people's failures—and through them all, dignity remains—and it is respected even after death.

* * * *

8. I feel that we should say some more about the spiritual life in America. "Intolerance," by Molly Haley, tells of a woman who sees her neighbor build a house different from hers, but she does not tear it down. Then, to our astonishment, she sees her neighbor

build a spiritual house unlike hers—and immediately she *does* tear it down. The author tells all in those words stronger than I could explain. We do need a greater respect for the dignity for each other's conscience and spiritual values; such a respect is necessary if our democracy is to live. Let's be sure to practice that kind of tolerance ourselves.

* * * *

9. In "Sophie Sells War Bonds," by Miss Feld,

She says, 'You are born in this country. Maybe you don't know how wonderful it is . . . schools . . . movies . . .

That made me wonder! Newcomers do appreciate our equal opportunities. Do we? We have grown up in them and we take them for granted . . . I believe that we must better appreciate them and better understand our America, after this term's literary study on our Nation's ideals. This is the best English class I've ever had. I know I love it!

* * * *

II. DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

A. That we really mean what we say about toleration and equality, there must be outward recognition of the dignity of our fellow men. Here we present a sampling of student comments on this second of our ideals. Some students found that dignity must be considered first as including all Americans.

* * * *

1.

In prince or peasant—slave or lord,
Pale priest or swarthy artisan.

So Whittier tells us what we are in "Democracy." We are Americans—all.

* * * *

2. Walt Whitman gives an unusual example of a living, genuine democracy. In "I Hear America Singing" there is dignity in each man's work, where each is happy at his work.

Each singing what belongs to him or her
And to none else.

I like to think of this as I walk past workmen, or sit beside them on the street car. It gives a greater happiness to every-day occurrences.

3. "In the Old World" is closely related to the last topics. In Europe the first question asked about a newcomer is, "Who are his family?" But in America we ask, "What can he do?" I think that tells what our attitude is toward the newcomer. It is himself whose dignity we recognize—not his family's. I am for the kind of recognition we give in America.

* * * *

4. But listen to Bret Harte! He shows in his stories, as in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," that even among the crude settlers of our Wild Western frontier, a sort of dignity still existed in those Americans. He brings out respect even for human weaknesses. This, I think, is part of our Americanism—our way of looking at life.

* * * *

B. Here we present our discoveries of American personal characteristics contributing to the dignity of American individuals.

* * * *

1. An early writer, St. John Crevecoeur, has this to say:

Formerly they were not numbered in any civil lists of their country, except in those of the poor; here they are ranked as citizens.

Everyone enjoys his four freedoms here, no matter how poor he is, nor what class he may have belonged to in Europe. We are all invited to accept the dignity of citizenship.

* * * *

2.

America is alone, many together,
Many of one mouth, of one breath.

Archibald MacLeish says this, and I think it could be the summary of all we've said so far. I think of America as one dignified group. We don't always feel conscious of it; but in times of crisis we do. One example of it I can remember is the bond of union we all felt the day President Roosevelt died. The whole country mourned together as one unit—not as many parties. We are united, even when we are not feeling so.

* * * *

3. Hannah Armstrong, from Edgar Lee Masters' "Spoon River Anthology," expected to find Lincoln different from the Illinois lawyer she had known . . . maybe superior to herself . . . by now. Instead she found him the same man he had been. He forgot his presidency; she was his equal, nothing less; and he granted her

request. Yes, our Presidents are of ourselves, and they show it by their humble actions. They know God is the Father of us all.

* * * *

4. The faults and foibles, the human weaknesses, and the grand spirit of the ordinary people in the midwest, where America is tolerant and appreciates the dignity of the individuals—this is the point of Ruth Suckow's "Midwestern Primitive." We like those people though we don't know Iowa! We're that way, too.

* * * *

C. Relationships with our fellow men, "imbrothered," bring these offerings:

* * * *

1. I believe that good writers, such as Carl Van Doren, possess enough humility to pass over their greatness, to look with awe to other really great men, such as Washington and Benjamin Franklin. Yes, we all respect each other. I like Carl Van Doren for that American trait.

* * * *

2. In Emerson's "Compensation" and also in Markham's "Imbrothered," the two authors a half century apart, is expressed the American awareness of our fellow men, as equals united with ourselves.

3. The common man holds the center of the stage in American dramas. Heroes come and go, but the character that holds first place on the stage is the common man. We like our plays that are that way, because they represent us all in the same class—and we don't despise anyone. Dignity belongs to all, as children of a common Father, God.

* * * *

4. I think Emily Dickinson's poem, "I'm Nobody," strikes the point in question. There she displays a certain humility, and yet a strong sense of dignity. We wouldn't want to change places with another. Our dignity doesn't depend upon glamour but upon interior qualities, soul awareness.

* * * *

D. Finally, American dignity of individuals displays itself in unexpected situations.

* * * *

1. James Russell Lowell recognizes this quality of Americans in his "Fable for Critics." We Americans have the right to express our opinions, even in a humorous way, and to fight to defend those

in difficulties. We are able to accept criticism, too, and to take it in good part.

* * * *

2.

that slavery was swept forever from American soil—the American union saved from the wreck of war.

This is from "The New South," by H. W. Grady. Here is a speech by a Southerner before a Northern audience. The dignity of the individual was necessary for the speaker, and for the audience. All Americans are glad that the Union was never broken! We are all glad that toleration and human dignity are always our mainstay, and pray that it is still growing stronger.

* * * *

3. Only in America is human dignity so deeply rooted that an employee can be acknowledged superior to his employer, by the employer, himself. Here the farm hand is so acknowledged by the farmer employer—even though the latter has been hurt, not only interiorly, but physically as well. The truth remained.

"Did he discharge you?"

"Discharge me? No! He knew I did just right."

* * * *

4. "Henry the Great," a story by Booth Tarkington, tells of Henry, a self-conscious, timid youth, learning of his own dignity from Miss Virginia, a self-possessed Miss, but one who recognizes true worth. Miss Virginia illustrates the American quality of toleration and happiness in serving others.

* * * *

5. The schoolmaster in "Snowbound," by Whittier,

Could doff at ease his scholar's gown,
To peddle wares from town to town.

American teachers and students do not hesitate to put aside their University gowns and their advanced notions, and become salesmen, office workers, etc. in summer. And they don't feel it is beneath them. There is dignity in work of any kind—with the hands, as well as with the mind.

* * * *

6. W. L. Vischer speaks with kindly sympathy and appreciation of Buffalo Bill and

his bucking bronchos and wild-eyed cattle, cowboys and Indians—but especially Buffalo Bill himself—tall fine-looking, the center of attraction.

This is almost history, and oh how romantic! Where but in our land could a phase of history read like this? And where else find such noble toleration, dignity and respect? Nowhere else could this have taken place.

* * * *

7. "Among the Corn Rows," by Hamlin Garland, tells this:

She wanted to be free to do just what she wanted, and not be governed by others all the time. She wanted to be independent of them.

What she wanted was to be an American, where everyone can enjoy his own freedom and personal dignity.

* * * *

III. LEISURE INDEPENDENT OF MONEY

Here are but a few examples of how others have had a good time without any money cost; we have tried them out and found more success than we could have expected.

A. Active pleasures

1. Cowboy Ballads—"Git Along Little Dogies," "Home on the Range," "Poor Lonesome Cowboy," and "The Cowboy Dream,"—and a dozen more recorded in our textbooks, and many on Victor records for our enjoyment, cost no money to read; and they cost no money to the cowboy who first sang them. Singing in groups is lots of fun—just for the effort. These songs have a romantic appeal as "escape literature."

* * * *

2. Anyone who likes adventure—and who doesn't?—will enjoy reading "Kit Carson's Ride," by Joaquin Miller. It is a colorful exciting ride of a legend, in poetry. It is easy reading. Its exciting adventure makes the heart beat faster. This is the way it runs:

Twenty miles! . . . thirty miles!
 . . . a dim, distant speck . . .
 Then a long reaching line
 And the Brazos in front!

Such writings keep alive the adventurous life of earlier times in America. They provide a grand time as a source of fun.

* * * *

3. Pleasure and leisure in action I find in Stephen Vincent Benét's "The Mountain Whippoorwill." It has a delightful dancing rhythm for oral reading. The story of the least expected, the so-called hill-billy, winning the contest is a joy. Too, we can have a

jolly time being fiddlers—if we know how and are generous. Everyone loves those who are.

* * * *

4. Robert Frost is always having a good time for nothing—that is, for no money cost. He finds pleasure in nature and in his work. Can't we all do that?

Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,

One on a side. It comes to little more. ("Mending Wall")

There are people who look on work as a hardship. Aren't they foolish, when they could—as this man does—make it a game and enjoy themselves?

* * * *

5.

Some boy too far from town to play baseball.

Yes, Robert Frost made the trees his playmates—or rather his toys. He could play only the games he taught himself, and by himself. This is from "Birches."

* * * *

6.

One by one he subdued his father's trees.

I'd like to add that a young boy would surely sympathize with this poem. The bending of the stately birches might be the conquering of a horse. Jubilantly the boy will defeat the reckless stallion. We have horses, you know; and this is what really happens.

* * * *

7. In "The Pasture," the author invites us with his jolly, "You come, too." Even in such a task he watches the pleasanter things in life. He will watch the water clear from a **muggy color of winter** to crystal clearness. That is a real pleasure. And we can all have that kind of fun, if we will only look for it.

* * * *

8. "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" brings us back to Walt Whitman. Here he finds pleasure in the simplest of things, having fun in the water of a river. We, of Chicago, have that kind of fun in our great lake. I guess there are few in America who cannot have that kind of free joy in summer, and its companion happiness of skating, etc. in winter.

* * * *

9. Maria Zaturenska, a Russian-American, says:

How poor I was, and yet no richer lover,

Discovered joy so deep in earth and water.

Even the poorest can have that pleasure. Only an appreciation of life and of nature is required.

* * * *

B. Passive Pleasures:

1. Robert Frost, in "Stopping by Woods of a Snowy Evening," enjoys the free beauties of nature.

* * * *

2.

I have flown away to an isle in the bay,
With the janitor's boy.

Nathalia Crane gives us great joy with her fantasy and great imagination. There are lots of poems like this one. They are to be had for the asking.

* * * *

3. I get pleasure hearing people tell of their adventures in earlier years. Whittier says that he does, too. Lives that are rich in experience have a source of enjoyment within themselves. That is what we learn in our Creative Writing class.

Our Father rode again his ride
On Memphremagog's wooded side,
Sat down again to moose and samp,
In trapper's hut and Indian camp. (from "Snowbound")

Such memories are beyond the price of money.

* * * *

4. Nancy Hanks, mother of Abraham Lincoln, found pleasure, and comfort besides, in going to Rock Spring and looking at the running water. So says Carl Sandburg.

* * * *

5. I like livelier fun, such as James Russell Lowell gives in "The Courtin'." And I know our literature has a great deal of humorous poetry. I've read many more than we have taken up in class.

* * * *

6. May I offer a different kind of humor in poetry? Dorothy Parker is fun if you can be smart enough to get her satire—as in "One Perfect Rose" and "Folk Tune." I think "Waltz" is out of date already.

* * * *

7. Franklin P. Adams offers another kind of fun, when he plays a joke on his readers and ends his poem in an unsuspected way. "The Boys" is an example.

8. Mark Twain, Clarence Day, and Mr. Hiram Kaplan, all have fun, and give great fun and pleasure at no money cost, to all of us. We can get a great kick out of listening to their experiences. Our everyday life, too, can take on a more joyous color.

* * * *

9. Pure pleasure, joy, and a really good time are opened to all by my favorites, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elinor Wylie, and Sara Teasdale, and others like these. If I took away from this class nothing else but my love for such poets as these, I'd have enough to live happily for a long time.

* * * *

The young women who gave these appraisals of pleasure and appreciation of American literature hope the readers of this report enjoy them.

SPRING MEETING OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

All members of the Association are invited to attend the annual meeting of the Executive Board, which will be held in the Rose Room of the Hotel Chicagoan, 67 W. Madison, Chicago, at 9:30 a. m., Saturday, May 6. Luncheon will be in the main dining room at 12:30. The Executive Board of the Chicago English Club will join us for the luncheon.

Reservations should be reported by April 29 to Mrs. Zada Templeton, 421 South Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. The price of the luncheon will be \$2.00 or \$2.25.

FROM THE EDITOR'S THOUGHTBOOK

Possibly a major goal of education should be the creation of restlessness in minds.

Contrast two equally capacious minds. One is quiet. It absorbs, files away. Most of what it files it never looks at again. When need does arise, it can pull out the information it can use. Then it closes the drawer and waits passively for a new need.

The other mind is restless, eddying, sometimes seething. It, too, absorbs and files. But constantly it explores the filing cabinet. It draws out Fact No. 181,472 and compares it with Fact No. 227,681. It re-arranges. It questions. It searches for needs, and for new cures of old needs. It accepts little on faith. It wants to know why and how. The concrete enthralles it no less than the abstract, the abstract no less than the concrete. It is concerned with ultimate causes, with the status quo, and with destinations.

Perhaps the restless mind is less happy than the quiet mind. But there are always compensations. Restless minds are of greater service to humanity. If Socrates, Goethe, Pasteur, Chopin, and Edison had had quiet minds, the world would not now know their names.

* * *

What, then, is poetry? Words—yes, but there are poems without words and words without poems. Feelings—yes, but there are feelings that have never been encompassed in a poem. High thoughts—yes, but high thoughts may be expressed in prose. “The best words in the best order”—but what is *best*? “The intellect colored by the feelings”—(a professor said that). Maybe Voltaire came close when he said, “Poetry is the music of the soul, and, above all, of great and feeling souls.” Emerson knew what poetry is: “The finest poetry was first experience. . . . Only that is poetry which cleanses and mans me.” He knew its condensation: “Poetry teaches the enormous force of a few words, and, in proportion to the inspiration, checks loquacity.”

* * *

She's young, but she gave a wise answer. The discussion in the class of prospective teachers had swung around to what in the old days was called “discipline.” (What is it they call it now—“the prevention of anti-social behavioristic patterns”? Maybe.)

“What can you do to keep youngsters from raising rumpuses in class, from acting like hellions?” asked the serious, bespectacled young man.

“You need to like them, and to let them know that you like them.” That's all she said.